

Selected Poems
of Venerable Moneyya

In Memory of my Mother
The Artist

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Note to the Reader

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Preface

Part of the joy of writing poetry is in sharing it with others, which I have done with my friends and family over the years, and now, for the first time, in this small book of verse, a select number of these poems have been compiled to share with a wider audience. With the exception of the first poem, this book spans the years of my life as a Buddhist practitioner, initially in the Zen tradition, later in the Theravada tradition, and finally as a Theravada Buddhist monk (*bhikkhu* in Pāli). This does not mean, however, that every one of these poems has a Buddhist theme or subject. Some of them do, but many do not, except in the sense that my orientation as a Buddhist practitioner serves as a backdrop for their presentation.

Several of the earlier poems merge this Buddhist orientation with those of other spiritual traditions. "Tears of Blood," for example, has an unmistakably Christian theme, while "Hansika" and "Return" were written during my residence at a yoga ashram. In order to avoid confusion about these different periods in my life, I have arranged the poems in chronological order and included specific locations where possible. This should make for greater continuity in the reading and also make it possible to trace the various threads of development running through the poetry. The poems are followed by a postscript, consisting of a series of aphorisms and epigrams that were separated out from the main body of the poetry due to their difference in style and character. A short biography has also been included at the end of the book, which will hopefully provide some insight into the origin of the author's works and make for a more fruitful reading experience.

My thanks to Ron Browning, Joanne Ferris and Philip Starkman for their support and encouragement, without which I would not have undertaken this project, and to others who read through the manuscript, made suggestions, and provided assistance with printing and emailing.

Bhikkhu Moneyya
Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
January, 2013

Selected Poems of Venerable Moneyya

Medusa

Medusa stands in grey twilight
That those may hide who wish to see the day and not the coming night,
Keeping watch upon her fearful flock,
Turning words to stone, lest they wander.
The muse of madness and a million corpses,
Lashing through their timeless dance like aberrations of the mind,
She screams commands
And strikes the blind puppets,
Crushing them beneath her feet as they run to do her deeds.
And we speak of human creeds,
While she pours the serpent's venom in our ears,
Makes bravery the tyrant's fool,
Spreads chaos in the name of truth,
And shatters us.
Then let us make a sacrificial altar in her name,
Call her beauty
And worship her with closed eyes.

Gypsy caves
Granada, Spain
1967

Father

In memory of my father

You are my father, I am your son;
We are one in blessed purity.
Our radiant love can eclipse the sun
And stay the season's fated course.
Within your timeless memory, I become a child again –
Cradled in your loving arms, all thoughts of sorrow flee.
You are my earth, father,
And I am the rain, soaking your pores with my tears.
Death cannot separate us father –
Even the dust beneath my feet contains your seed,
And flowers bloom from your ravaged breast.
I will always be with you father.
Your breath fills my spirit with boundless aspiration,
And I encompass the stars,
Where you burn brightly in eternal solitude.

Rochester, NY
February, 1987

Tears of Blood

“Horse and wagon part. Bloody tears flow.” – I Ching

Tears of blood stain the cheeks of my Madonna,
Who did no wrong and yet was forced to see
Her only son crucified upon the cross of man's ignorance.
Who can know the burden that she carried on her way to Calvary?
Who can know the depths of her despair?
Imagine, if you can, that final tragic scene:

The hill, the guards, the crown of thorns, the prisoner struggling to his fated
destination, the jeering crowd, the spikes, the cross, the growing gloom, the
silhouette with arms outstretched, the words of absolution.

Can you hear the groaning of the firmaments as earth prepares to give him up?
Can you taste the bitterness upon the lips of those who have betrayed him?
Can you see the heavenly descent of cherubim and seraphim coming to receive him?
Can you feel those tears of blood that fell upon the multitudes and washed away their
sins?

Rochester, NY
April, 1989

The Rope of Lust

The rope of lust is like a line
Attached to thoughts which seem divine.
It strangles Logic's Golden Rule
And makes of man a beast most cruel.

I long to hold love's crimson rose
But grasp the thorn with which it grows.
A fevered passion burns my heart
For I'm struck down by Cupid's dart.

How many lives this game I've played
As many deaths can ne'er be stayed.
The very thing I crave the most
Is what turned the king into a ghost.

So now I'll bid the world adieu –
This passion play that turns the screw
Which crucifies the best of men
And brings them back to play again.

From Wisdom's chalice I will drink
With faith in Causal Chain's each link.
I'll fight delusion's rising tide
Whose siren song is passion's bride

And set my course by freedom's star
Knowing well the path leads far
Into the night where tempests reign
But inch by inch I'll make my gain.

And if a moment's thoughtless glance
Inclines my flesh toward sweet romance
I'll summon forth with clear recall
The ditch awaiting mankind's fall.

This thought alone will set me free
From bondage to eternity
And when the inner battle's won
I'll hear the gods proclaim, "Well done! Well done!"

On the road, USA
1989

Hansika

To Hansika on her 60th

Hansika is truth, knowledge, bliss divine –
It's all in a name, it's all in a rhyme.
How did she forget the root of her noun?
She likes to play games, she thinks she's a clown.
I once saw Hansika playing "Maori" with sticks;
She tossed one to me, it's one of her tricks.
I didn't respond quite quickly enough,
But that's part of the rules, there's no time to bluff.
No doubt, Hansika's a sudra, she's not upper crust.
She works for a living, a nine-to-five bust.
But Hansika's got something that goes beyond art:
She gives all she's got, cause Hansika's got heart.
Now Hansika's got sixty years under her belt;
She's seen how dreams vanish, how visions can melt.
And Hansika's not looking for fortune or fame,
But at your request, she's still good for a game.

Satchidananda Ashram
Virginia, 1990

Return

He comes and goes as he pleases,
Crossing the great ocean and the perilous heights.
This is the sign of return:
After sickness comes health, after darkness comes light.
Should one applaud the day?
Should one lament the night?
The entire universe is his home.

Satchidananda Ashram
Virginia, 1990

Bojjhanga Sutta
Discourse on the Seven Factors of Enlightenment
(translated from the Mahāparitta Pāli)

The factors of enlightenment consist of seven dhammas,
Which have the power to vanquish Māra's army
And eradicate all the suffering of those beings who are transmigrating in samsāra.

Having practiced and realized these seven dhammas,
Those beings liberated themselves from the three realms
And attained the birthless, ageless, deathless state –
Where sickness, fear and danger reign no more.

Endowed with innumerable benefits and virtues,
The recitation of the Bojjhanga Sutta is medicinal for both body and mind.
Let us now recite this sutta.

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment are Mindfulness, Investigation of the Dhamma,
Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration and Equanimity.
All seven factors were well expounded by the All-Seeing Sage.

When developed and frequently practiced,
These factors lead to the direct realization of the Four Noble Truths, to path knowledge
and to the attainment of Nibbāna.
By this declaration of truth, may you be always well.

At one time the Venerable Mahā Mogallāna and the Venerable Mahā Kassapa were sick,
suffering and in pain.
The Blessed One, seeing their condition,
Proceeded to expound the Seven Factors of Enlightenment to them.
The two elders were delighted and rejoiced in his words;
At that very moment each was liberated from his illness.
By this declaration of truth, may you be always well.

Once, even the King of Dhamma was afflicted with an illness.
Then the Elder Cunda was asked to recite that same discourse, with due reverence.
Having delighted in that recitation,
The Blessed One recovered from his illness.
By this declaration of truth, may you be always well.

Just as the defilements, eradicated by path knowledge,
Can rise again no more, in like manner
These ailments were overcome by those three great sages.
By this declaration of truth, may you be always well.

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
February, 2003

Methuselah

One step at a time,
Old Methuselah walked in concord with the ancient law.
He had no access to the internet,
No need for firewalls or anti-virus protection,
Knew nothing of gigabytes, memory sticks or virtual reality.
As he approached old age and bones grew brittle, he slowed his pace
But did not surrender his faith;
What he lost in strength, he gained in grace.
If only we could be like him, content with little
Moving one step at a time with conviction.

Whom can we honour if not the aged?
Whom can we trust if not the wise?
How many lives are lost moving down the fast lane,
Going God knows where?
How many battles fought because of too much ambition?

How can we buy what we cannot sell?
How can we sell what we cannot buy?
Who can stop the clock,
Undo the blunders of the past,
Or bend the future from its fated course?

Truly, we are fixed in stone.
But lo, the stone dissolves.
Soon it will be nothing but sand.

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
October, 2006

Rules

He follows the rules,
But the rules do not follow him.
He conforms to the order,
But his mind rebels.
The jewel he seeks, he cannot find,
Neither in the folds of his robe
Nor the lip of his bowl.
What good to seek for non-essentials
When the essential is waiting to embrace us.
Go to her and surrender yourself –
Let go the mind that seeks the way.
Dissolve into the present moment
And the timeless bliss of her sweet embrace.
Listen closely and she will tell you what to do:
Let go! Let go! Cease to grasp! Let go!

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
June, 2007

Bhikkhu Beware!

Beware! Beware! Bhikkhu beware!
For what we say will come to fare –
A tune that burns each note upon the khandha's mortal frame,
A song we sing of suffering, for anyone we call a name;
For what we say is duly sung,
As courts of law judge cases one by one;
Then let each note from kamma's fateful song
Be rightly sung and not be wrong,
For careless words that stain a bhikkhu's face
Lack wisdom, virtue, mindfulness and grace.

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
September, 2007

U Subhūti

He draws his sword
And cuts through empty space.
He takes up the great burden
But it is not heavy.
He speaks
But is not heard.
He enters the market place
And dwells in seclusion.
He leaves home and family
But has nowhere to go.
He renounces the low life
And lives on offerings and leftovers.
He meets his debt
But does not know how to pay it.
He looks up into the heavens
And is blinded by the sun.
His face shines
Yet he sees no one.

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
2007

Song of Sharing

(adapted from a popular Sri Lankan song)

With red and white roses
And lilies offered to the shrine,
The devotees with faith unwavering,
Cling not to “me and mine.”

As birds upon the wing
Move freely through the sky,
So ants seek refuge in their anthills
And squirrels their tree-homes ply.

Such is nature’s law: Rains fall,
Flowing ownerless across the land
And sing a song of sharing
For peace sublime and grand.

Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery
Brisbane, Australia
April, 2008

Chinese New Year's Poem

To live in peace, we must forgive,
As we would be forgiven.
By forgiving, we release the heart
And receive the gift we've given.

Two wrongs indeed don't make a right,
But one right can right two wrongs;
This is heaven's golden mean
And the sweetest of all songs.

It soothes the raging beast within
And brings an end to war;
It overcomes all enmity
And leads to freedom's shore.

So easily the debt is dropped
The moment we forgive
And set ourselves a higher norm –
To live and to let live.

Then peace will reign throughout the land,
And harmony's bright ray
Will shine within our hearts again
On Chinese New Year's Day.

Chinese New Year's Day
Bodhi-Heart Sanctuary
Penang, Malaysia
February 14, 2010

A Vesak Thought for the Coming Year

It is not the robe that makes the monk,
But the monk who makes the robe.
His needle and thread are one-pointedness and strong determination.
His robe material is this human birth,
Its stitching is the Eightfold Path,
And the dye is Dhamma-Vinaya.
His girding-belt is insight-knowledge,
His sitting cloth is faith,
His razor is renunciation,
His water strainer, insects' grace.
His umbrella is dispassion,
His alms bowl, sense-restraint,
And the finished robe, Nibbāna
Is the ending of all taints.
Such a robe indeed, adorns the monk who wears it well,
And he in turn becomes a field of merit
For all the world, where men and devas dwell.

Bodhi-Heart Sanctuary
Penang, Malaysia
May, 2010

Angulimāla Revisited

(adapted from the Theragāthā 866-91)

Who once did live in negligence
And then is negligent no more,
Shines like the moon freed from a cloud,
Which brightens earth's broad shore.

Who overcomes the evil deeds he did,
By doing wholesome deeds instead,
Shines like a beacon in the night,
By which mankind is safely led.

The youthful bhikkhu who devotes himself
With great effort to the Buddha's way,
Shines like the rising sun at dawn,
Which drives the darkness of the night away.

Let my enemies hear this discourse on the Dhamma then,
Let them be devoted to the Buddha's way,
And let them wait on those good folk,
Who lead others to the Dhamma day by day.

And let my enemies give ear from time to time,
To hear the words of those who teach them to forbear,
Of those who speak in praise of kindness,
And having heard, may they in turn be kind and fair.

For surely they would not wish to harm me then,
Nor would they think to take another's life;
So to those who would protect all beings, both weak and strong,
May they attain the peace that overcomes all strife.

Conduit makers guide the water's flow;
Fletchers straighten out the arrow's shaft;
Carpenters straighten timber's warps and bends,
But a straightened mind is wisdom's greatest craft.

There are some who tame with beatings,
Some with goads and some with whips they bring,
But I was tamed by one who leaves
No mark of rod nor weapon's sting.

"Harmless" is the name I bore,
Though I was dangerous in the past;
But the name I bore is true today –
I hurt no living being at last.

And though I once lived as a bandit fierce,
Bearing "Angulimāla" as my name,
One whom the great flood swept along,
I took refuge in the Buddha and was thereby freed from blame.

And though I once was bloody-handed,
Named for all the fingers I had cut,
See the refuge I have found –
The bond of being has now been cut.

And though I once did many deeds
That could have led to rebirth in a woeful state,
Their kammic fruit has reached me now,
And so I eat debt-free, untouched by greed or hate.

They indeed are fools and have no sense,
Who give themselves to negligence,
But those of wisdom guard their virtue well
And know that virtue is their best defense.

And thus I say, “Do not give way to negligence,
Nor in sensual pleasures be remiss,
But meditate with diligence,
So as to reach the highest bliss.”

So welcome to that choice of mine
And let it stand above the rest;
Of all the dhammas known to man,
I have come upon the very best.

So welcome to that choice of mine
And let it stand, it was not ill wrought;
I have attained the triple knowledge
And done everything the Buddha taught.

I stayed in forests, at the roots of trees,
And dwelt in mountain caves alone,
But in those days, no matter where I went,
I had not arrived at my true home.

Now I rest and rise in happiness,
And happily I spend my time,
For now I’m free from Mara’s snare;
Ah, to me the Buddha was so merciful and kind!

A Brahmin noble by descent,
On both sides high and purely born,
Today I am the master’s son,
An heir in Dhamma of the perfect norm.

Free from craving, without grasping,
With guarded senses, well restrained,
Spewn forth the root of future suffering,
The end of taints have I attained.

In sooth, the master has been served by me full well,
And all the Buddha’s bidding has been done.
The heavy load I bore so long is finally dropped,
And the ending of samsāra, finally won.

Centre de Meditation Vipassana Sakyamuni
Saint-Agnon, France
July, 2010

Truth

He aligns his mind with truth
And removes the crookedness from his character.
Purified of pretense and duplicity,
He goes his way independent of the many.
Unswayed by others' points of view,
He does not lose the balance of his mind.
Just as the compass needle,
Aligned with earth's magnetic field,
Wavers neither to the east nor west,
So he whose mind is in accord with Dhamma
Wavers neither to the past nor future,
Nor does he cling to notions such as good or bad, or right or wrong.
Thus he bides his time, mindful and equanimous,
With faith firmly grounded in the Middle Way,
And asks for nothing more.

Na Uyana Aranya
Pansiyagama, Sri Lanka
November, 2011

At Patimokkha

With roving eye and simulated smile,
He tosses his eyeglass case into the air.
Who could fail to see the case's rise and fall,
Born of the shamelessness of such a dare?
Caught by its tail, the two-faced viper will no doubt bite,
And bitten, we will badly fare.

Oh Mahakassapa, leader of the Sangha,
We have been bitten and are in need of your care.
Oh Mahakassapa, guardian of the Dhamma,
Perfect in virtue and supremely austere
– You who could not be bought at any price –
Where have you gone, oh where?

Na Uyana Aranya
Pansiyagama, Sri Lanka
November, 2011

Unfinished Dhammapada
(translated from the Dhammapada)

1. The Twin Verses

1. Mind is the forerunner of all conditioned states, mind is their leader, mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.
2. Mind is the forerunner of all conditioned states, mind is their leader, mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows him as surely as his ever-present shadow.
3. “He abused me, he struck me, he defeated me, he robbed me” – in those who harbour such thoughts, hatred is not appeased.
4. “He abused me, he struck me, he defeated me, he robbed me” – in those who do not harbour such thoughts, hatred is appeased.
5. Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. Only by non-hatred is hatred appeased – this is an eternal law.
6. Those who live by hatred have forgotten that we all must one day die. Those who know this truth settle their quarrels.
7. Who lives contemplating the attractive and the lovely, with senses unrestrained, immoderate in food, indolent and dissipated, him verily does Mara overcome, even as the wind blows down a weakened tree.
8. Who lives contemplating the repulsive and the ugly, with senses restrained, moderate in food, firm in faith and energy, him can Mara never overcome, even as the wind cannot blow down a rocky peak.
9. Who wears the bhikkhu’s yellow robe, yet bears the stain of passion, devoid of self-control and truthfulness – such a one is not worthy of the yellow robe.
10. Having purged himself of passion’s stain and kept the moral precepts well, endowed with self-control and truthfulness – such a one indeed is worthy of the yellow robe.
11. Taking the unessential as essential and the essential as unessential, they enter the field of wrong thought and never arrive at the essential.
12. Knowing the essential as essential and the unessential as unessential, they enter the field of right thought and thereby arrive at the essential.
13. Just as the rain penetrates an ill-thatched roof, even so does lust penetrate the untrained mind.
14. Just as the rain cannot penetrate a well-thatched roof, even so is lust unable to penetrate a well-trained mind.

15. Here he grieves, hereafter he grieves, in this world and the next, the evil-doer grieves. He grieves and is afflicted, recollecting the impurity of his own past deeds.

16. Here he rejoices, hereafter he rejoices, in this world and the next, the well-doer rejoices. He rejoices and is uplifted, recollecting the purity of his own past deeds.

17. Here he's tormented, hereafter he's tormented, in this world and the next, the evil-doer is tormented. The thought, "Evil have I done" torments him, and he's tormented even more when he goes to states of woe.

18. Here he delights, hereafter he delights, in this world and the next, the well-doer delights. The thought, "Good have I done" delights him, and he delights even more when he goes to states of bliss.

19. However much he recites the sacred texts, but acts not accordingly, that heedless man is like a cowherd who counts the kine of others – he has no share in the blessings of the holy life.

20. Though little he recites the sacred texts, but acts according to the teaching, forsaking lust, hatred and delusion, and clinging naught to this world or any other – such a one, with knowledge true and mind well-freed, shares indeed the blessings of the holy life.

2. Heedfulness

21. Heedfulness is the path to the Deathless, heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are as if already dead.

22. Having clearly understood this truth, the wise rejoice in heedfulness and find their pleasure in the resort of the noble ones.

23. Ever meditative and steadfast in effort, these wise ones experience Nibbāna, the supreme security from bondage.

24. Who lives in Dhamma, with actions pure, energetic and mindful, heedful and restrained, his fame ever grows.

4. Flowers

49. Just as a bee gathers nectar and flies away without harming the flower or disturbing its colour or scent, so should the sage go on his alms round through the village.

18. Impurities

239. Even as the smith refines silver, so, little by little, gradually, moment by moment does the wise man fine away his defilements.

Colombo, Sri Lanka
December, 2011

China

If the Chinese could see where they were headed,
They would go back to Confucianism.

If they could see the consequence of where they were headed,
They would go back to Taoism.

If they could see the cause of where they were headed,
They would go back to Buddhism.

Green Valley Forest Refuge
Sebastopol, California
July, 2012

Sagara

I

Like an ocean is the bodhisattva:
Extending in all directions
Rising to every occasion
Sustaining each and every creature
Bearing what must be born
Penetrating the depths
Unfathomable

II

The surf roars like an angry lion
Silence within
Here time flows with the ocean currents
And the swirl of birth and death in the all-consuming struggle for survival
In still waters, everything stops
Water above, water below, water within
The bodhisattva's mind flows outward to encompass the universe
How to measure the infinite?

Green Valley Forest Refuge
Sebastopol, California
August, 2012

Beeing Time

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a bee
That spreads its shining wings in flight
And brings to all such great delight.

In valleys greened with redwood trees,
The wondrous bee dost shake its knees,
To pollinate the world to date
And open Eden's garden gate.

In meadows filled with wild flowers,
The buzzing bee dost pass its hours,
To warm the hearts of passers by
With a sun-filled bee-time lullaby.

From flower to flower the bee dost light,
As happy as a woodland sprite.
It leaves each blossom as it found,
As it makes its way on alms-bee-round.

From lilac to the honeysuckle,
The busy bee in flight dost hustle.
From lavender to Queen Anne's lace,
It never seems to lose its pace.

On summer days that languid lie,
Our busy bee is never shy,
To seek the undiscovered bloom
Or gnarled branch draped with perfume.

Within the heart of love's sweet rose,
Our gentle bee a harvest sows,
So that the rose may bloom again
In rocky cleft and forest glen.

It's not a GMO-type ploy
That brings the world such scented joy,
But nature's gift to all who thrive
Upon the fruits of the beehive.

So let us thank the humble bee,
Who gives its life in service free,
And in our hearts the words enshrine
A big "BEE HERE NOW" for all bee-kind.

Green Valley Forest Refuge
Sebastopol, California
September, 2012

What Would Beauty Be?

What would beauty be without desire?
The rose without its scent,
The plan with nothing to aspire,
The heart unbound that yearns for none,
The love unconsummate,
The doing left undone.
True perfection it would be,
A beauty unconstrained and free,
Resplendent and beyond compare,
For beauty would be everywhere.

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
December, 2012

Final Words

A Reflection on Death

For all out presumption, we are but pawns in the service of King Death,
Players on an empty stage,
Conspirators of the dead, imprisoned by our fears and dreams.
Oh youth, how can you be so blind?
How can you not see the terminus of life's highway, where all must exit?
How can you not see the graves of your parents and grandparents, and the hand of death
reaching up to pull you in?
How can you not see death's vacant stare in the eyes of your beloved or the seed of death
entering her womb at the time of conception?
How can you not see death's claim upon the child you call your own, and upon the
children of that child, and the children of its children?
How can you not see the inescapable conclusion to life's journey and the providence of its
one immutable truth: whoever is born must die?
How can you not see the flower of life fading and the seed of death sprouting within?

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Myanmar
February, 2013

Postscript

A Collection of Aphorisms and Epigrams by Venerable Moneyya

The following series of aphorisms and epigrams were culled from the previous poems and arranged in chronological order in the four sub-sections below. The time frame of their composition overlaps the author's second stay in Sri Lanka, his stay in the US, and his return to Myanmar. Due to the fundamental difference in style and character between poetry and aphorism, it might be best to read these two different art forms on separate occasions. Despite this contrast, however, the reader may notice some concordance of subject matter between the poems and aphorisms that were written in the same period.

I

- Silence should come from the heart. A forced silence is no better than no silence at all.
- The greatest of all teachings is a good example.
- The true measure of man's greatness is that it cannot be measured.
- As long as we continue to try to impose our views on others, the world will be enveloped in conflict. Not until we finally relinquish this tyranny of the mind, will mankind be able to live in true peace.
- How to choose between an inconvenient truth and a convenient untruth? Is this not the dilemma that life is constantly presenting us?
- If we keep on sweeping the dirt under the rug, a day will come when there will be more dirt than there is rug to cover it. Thus, sooner or later, the dirt is bound to reappear.
- He who would willingly sacrifice the one for the many, would also no doubt willingly sacrifice the many for the one.
- The Middle Way is the path that avoids extremes, but it does not oppose extremes, since opposition in itself is an extreme.

II

- Better to be a lone wolf than to live in the company of jackals.
- If only Ronald Mc Donald could see the suffering in a hamburger, it would wipe the smile off his face and he would be forced to stop playing the clown.
- Buy now, pay later actually means pay now, buy later.
- Don't do today what you can put off until tomorrow.
- Frugality shares what you don't need with others; stinginess hoards it for yourself.
- Money is the root of all money, evil is the root of all evil; mix the two, and you end up with a multi-national corporation.
- Why is there a great way and a small way? It has nothing to do with background or tradition, but rests solely on a person's character: a great person follows the great way, a small person follows the small way.

III

- One who has unshakeable faith does not need to reinvent the wheel. If he can stop the wheel from turning, that is enough.
- If you want to follow another's example, observe him closely, until you can hear the hidden meaning behind his words and see the future results of his actions.
- Some dogs act more like humans, and some humans act more like dogs. Therefore, we should not take our humanity for granted.
- What you see is only the tip of the iceberg; what you get could sink the Titanic.
- People never see what they get; they only see what they want to get.
- What is the ideal state? Ah yes, that's it.

IV

- Old age creeps up on us like a titmouse, but pounces on us like a lion.
- Beauty is as beauty was.
- "Vanity of vanities" – some things never change.
- Favoritism and oppression go hand in hand – what you give to one you take from another. Don't think you're Robin Hood.
- Happy is he who does not seek happiness.

May, 2011 – February, 2013

Biography

Venerable Moneyya was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1946 and spent his early youth in Cleveland, Ohio. He attended Stanford University for one year and then transferred to University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. Several months later, he dropped out and spent the next two-and-a-half years traveling through Europe and the Middle East, before returning to the US and joining the Rochester Zen Center in December of 1968. His involvement with the Rochester Zen Center included a two year stint as a Zen monk from 1973 to 1975.

In 1988 he began to practice Theravada Buddhist meditation, and in 1989 he sold his house and business, and retired to Satchidananda Ashram in central Virginia to undertake the practice of yoga. In 2000 he traveled to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery in Myanmar, taking temporary ordination there as a Theravada Buddhist monk, and in 2002 he returned to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery to re-ordain and spend his remaining years.

Due to a gradually worsening health condition, he left Myanmar in December of 2007 to seek medical assistance in Australia, spending time at several monasteries there. Over the next four years, he traveled respectively to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, France, back to Sri Lanka, and then to the US, before returning to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery in November of 2012. Venerable Moneyya currently resides at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery in Myanmar and spends his time in the practice of meditation and leading the simple life of a Buddhist monk.